

**SAVANNAH HARBOR EXPANSION
PROJECT MANAGEMENT PLAN**



APPENDIX I

SEG OPERATING GUIDELINES

**DOCUMENT EXPRESSES THE MISSION AND FUNCTION OF THE SEG
AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH GPA AND IS NOT SUBJECT TO USACE
REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

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STAKEHOLDERS EVALUATION GROUP

OPERATING GUIDELINES

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The information in Appendix I was obtained from GPA's Harbor Deepening Website. An online copy can be found at:

<http://www.sysconn.com/harbor/SEG/Commrpts/OGC/seg%20operating%20guidelines%20rev%20e.htm>

I. Introduction and Mission.

- A. The Stakeholders Evaluation Group (SEG) is formed to provide a public forum and assist the Georgia Ports Authority (GPA) to develop scientific studies and analyses necessary to identify impacts on specific environmental concerns that may result from proposed deepening of the harbor channel. The SEG process has as its principal deliverables consensus amongst the participants regarding:
1. the scope and content of the scientific investigations and analyses to be performed pursuant to the development of a Tier II EIS
 2. the impacts of the project and the resulting appropriate mitigation actions

The SEG will use these scientific studies and analyses to provide input to a mitigation plan alternative which will specify the mitigation necessary to avoid, minimize, and compensate for the impacts. The SEG recognizes that the federal and state regulatory agencies must retain their respective independence to ensure any proposed plan meets agency requirements. The SEG also recognizes that the outcome of the process may result in a determination by the SEG that there is no feasible mitigation plan. Deliberations of the SEG will be based on the Stakeholders Evaluation Group Agreement reached among some of the responsible agencies as stated in the Tier I Environmental Impact Statement filed with GPA's report and recommendation to the Secretary of the Army.

Consensus of the SEG scientific analysis analyses will be incorporated into a Tier II Final Environmental Impact Statement which requires approval of the Secretary of the Army, in consultation with the other responsible federal department heads, prior to project construction. Minority views contra to the consensus Tier II Environmental Impact Statement will be submitted simultaneously with the consensus report.

In its capacity as the project sponsor, GPA will facilitate the SEG process and provide funding for studies and administrative support to the SEG. GPA's

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involvement will be guided by its Charter responsibility to serve Georgia business while maintaining the natural quality of Georgia's coastal and river environment.

While the SEG will focus on environmental impacts and such economic issues as may be related to or derived from the environmental impacts, it is the expectation of the SEG that GPA will provide similar opportunities for public review and input on cultural issues, broader economic issues, design and engineering issues, implementation issues and other issues that may result from the proposed deepening project. SEG members shall be notified of, and may participate in meetings related to such varied issues and all findings and reports shall be made available to SEG members.

A list of the issues and recommended studies, leading to the above principal deliverables shall be maintained in Appendix A. A list of all tentative or proposed issues for possible study shall be maintained as Appendix B. Both shall be updated as appropriate.

II. Principles.

- A. Deliberations of the SEG will be scientific in nature and be based on the best science available.
 - 1. When impacts or concerns that have been identified or evaluated by the SEG are used in preparation of, or as a basis for, any type of economic analysis or cost projection, GPA shall provide such analysis or projection in its entirety for review and comment by the SEG. The SEG may request that such analysis or projection be submitted for review by an independent economist, accountant or other financial professional chosen by the SEG, and whose findings shall be reported to the SEG.
- B. Decisions will be by consensus, not by majority vote.
 - 1. Consensus is the mutual feeling that all concerns have been addressed and that all parties can live with the proposed course of

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action. "Consensus does not necessarily mean unanimity or 100 percent agreement on everything by everybody. Consensus is not conformity." {From "Rules for Reaching Consensus, A Modern Approach to Decision Making" by Steven Saint and James R. Lawson.) In the event of a dispute as to whether consensus has been reached, the SEG will revisit the definition of consensus.

2. Notwithstanding such consensus, any SEG member(s) may submit a differing viewpoint, which shall be attached as an appendix to the meeting transcript with the submitting member(s) identified.
 3. Estimated time allocations for the agenda items will be provided by the facilitator in consultation with the Steering Committee, and approved by the SEG. When an estimated time allocation has been reached, the facilitator will inform the SEG and ask the members for a determination as to whether progress is being made. If the response is affirmative, the SEG will make a decision as to whether to continue the discussion or to defer it. If the response is negative, the discussion will be deferred. In either case, the SEG will designate a time certain for resuming the discussion, which may be either later in the meeting or at a future meeting.
 - a. If the issue primarily involves only a small number of SEG members, the SEG may request that the concerned parties meet as an ad hoc committee and report back to the SEG with a recommended course of action.
 - b. If the issue is one which has come from or is appropriate for a specific committee, the SEG may refer the matter back to said committee.
- C. The organizational structure of the SEG will be determined by the SEG and may include the use of committees for specific tasks. The SEG will establish guidelines and determine the scope of work for each such committee. All committee work product will be subject to approval and acceptance by the full SEG
- D. Work will be accomplished by discrete assignments performed by appropriate individuals, groups, or consultants as agreed by the SEG.

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- E. Detailed activities required to meet the objectives of the SEG will be developed by the SEG.
- F. The SEG is both an advisory group to GPA and a public forum. Its decisions, recommendations, conclusions, or opinions are not binding upon any member. Nothing herein compromises or alters the legally defined responsibilities, authority, or operational procedures imposed on any agency or organization. SEG members function as individuals; their expressions of consensus are not official organizational positions unless specifically designated as such.
- G. Tasks to resolve concerns having to do with the Savannah Harbor Expansion Project may be proposed by any member of the SEG for consideration by the Georgia Ports Authority. - Task statements would include (1) type of effort required, (2) responsible party, (3) schedule and funding requirements, (4) intended results and deliverables (5) possible spill over impact affecting other stakeholders, and (6) intended use of the results in developing the mitigation plan. The SEG shall define the content of each task, including as applicable:
 - 1. Model boundaries, critical parameters, data requirements, analysis increments, and modeling scenarios.
 - 2. Effects on species of flora and fauna to be studied.
 - 3. Effects on other issues to be studied
 - 4. Criteria to quantify effects from environmental changes.
 - 5. Criteria to evaluate and rank effects.
 - 6. Deliverable(s) to be provided to the SEG, including interim reports of progress, final reports, data tables, etc.
 - 7. Discussion of alternative scoping designs.

As part of the evaluation of the proposal by the SEG for recommendation to GPA, consideration shall be given to the applicability of the task to the Harbor Deepening Project. Those concerns which do not meet USACE criteria for applicability to the deepening project shall not be dismissed without further consideration. Rather, the SEG shall seek to assist the

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proponent in identifying the appropriate mechanism to address the concern.

- H. All scientific or technical reports, findings, or conclusions of the SEG or its committees shall include a statement which clearly identifies the boundaries and limitations of such report, finding, or conclusion; and such statement shall be included whenever such reports, findings, or conclusions are cited or quoted.
- I. All meetings of the SEG, including any committee or subgroup performing SEG tasks, shall be considered subject to and shall comply with provisions specified in the Georgia Open Meetings Act. All records, findings, data, reports, etc., shall be considered to be public records subject to the provisions of the Georgia Open Records Act.
- J. The SEG will integrate work by others in the estuary and basin to leverage information and action opportunities.

III. Principal Functions

A. SEG

Through scientific analysis, determine by consensus to what extent to modify the current Tier I EIS mitigation plan to formulate a plan that will govern the final design and construction of the authorized project. Activities will include:

1. Recommend studies and other "straw man" documents to be developed that will define impacts to specific environmental concerns that may result from proposed deepening of the harbor channel.
2. Evaluate such studies developed by GPA or others and recommend adoption.
3. Recommend mitigation studies, including the alternatives to be developed, to address unacceptable environmental/economic impacts.

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4. Evaluate such mitigation studies developed by GPA or others, including ranking of competing mitigation alternatives, and recommend adoption.
5. Through scientific analysis, determine by consensus to what extent to modify the current Tier I EIS mitigation plan to formulate a plan that will govern the final design and construction of the authorized project.
6. Identify other activities required to meet the objectives of the SEG.
7. Monitor or otherwise participate in all relevant aspects of SEG deliberations.
8. Support communication of SEG consensus decisions within each member's agency.

B. GPA

Through scientific analysis and consensus, agree to what extent to modify the current Tier I EIS mitigation plan to formulate a plan that will govern the final design and construction of the authorized project. Activities will include:

1. Develop task statements and other "straw man" documents in advance of the tasks to be performed in order to allow opportunity for review and comment by the SEG.
2. Develop studies recommended by the SEG, as required to meet the EIS Tier II process.
3. Maintain a master schedule and exert every effort to meet consensus schedules.
4. Issue agendas for SEG meetings, with input from SEG members, well in advance of such meetings; provide a location for such meetings; issue notes summarizing the results and discussion of such meetings in a timely manner.
5. Monitor or otherwise participate in all relevant aspects of SEG deliberations.

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6. Assist in preparation of an after action report to be included in the Tier II EIS as an indication of the consensus support for the outcome of SEG efforts.
7. Participate in all relevant aspects of SEG deliberations

IV. Implementation

- A. Focus on scientific and engineering considerations in working toward consensus.
- B. Develop a consensus value system for evaluating and comparing study results and alternative mitigation plans.
- C. Integrate related work by others in the estuary to leverage information and action opportunities.

V. Defining Tasks

The SEG is expected to operate by defining and carrying out specific tasks. GPA and other members may propose "straw man" of tasks for SEG consideration and consensus. Each individual straw man will include the following definition as applicable:

- A. Model boundaries, critical parameters, data requirements, analysis increments, modeling scenarios,
- B. Species of flora and fauna to be studied,
- C. Criteria to quantify effects on species from environmental changes,
- D. Criteria to evaluate and rank effects

VI. SEG Organization and Support

- A. Membership

SEG Membership shall be listed in Appendix C.

- B. Management and administrative support:

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GPA will support the work of the SEG under authority of Section 203 and/or Section 204 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986 (subject to appropriations of state funds).

1. Provide an SEG facilitator, and other administrative support.
 2. Conduct scientific and engineering studies and analyses necessary to complete a satisfactory project analysis under requirements of NEPA and all other relevant federal and state laws.
 3. Provide periodic status reports on project studies.
 4. Provide coordination with consultants and insure necessary cooperation on work products being developed under this SEG.
- C. The organizational structure of the SEG will be determined by the SEG and may include the use of committees for specific tasks. The SEG will establish guidelines and determine the scope of work for each such committee. All committee work products will be subject to approval and acceptance by the full SEG. The SEG will consider a policy committee and various technical committees as needed.
1. Existing committees will be listed in Appendix D, which shall be modified as necessary. Each committee's mission, and membership shall be described.

VII. Public Information

A. Public participation and information

The SEG meetings will be open to the public. Any documents prepared by the SEG and approved by the SEG membership shall be posted by GPA on their Internet web site. Such postings shall be made without alteration of the SEG provided document. They are intended to provide access to the general public for SEG information.

B. Representation of the SEG

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No member shall represent the SEG to the media or any other body unless they have been explicitly approved to do so in advance by the SEG. Any statements to be released to the media shall be approved in advance by the SEG.

VIII. Appendix A List of Issues and Recommended Studies

This listing will be maintained as recommendations are made by the SEG for studies.

- A. A hydrodynamic computer model to accurately evaluate the impacts of channel deepening on salinity in the Savannah Harbor and the resulting impacts on the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge, the endangered shortnose sturgeon, striped bass spawning and nursery habitat through use of a hydrodynamic computer model.
- B. A study report outlining an evaluation of the impacts of harbor channel deepening on chloride levels, especially at the City of Savannah's water intake through the use of a hydrodynamic computer model optimized for chlorides.
- C. A hydrodynamic computer model to accurately predict the impacts of channel deepening on dissolved oxygen deficit in the Savannah Harbor and the resulting impacts on the endangered shortnose sturgeon through the use of a hydrodynamic computer model optimized for dissolved oxygen.
- D. A consensus mitigation plan to address identified impacts to dissolved oxygen, salinity and chloride for an acceptable channel depth
- E. A study report on the economic impacts of the deepening and proposed mitigation plan.
- F. A report on how the mitigation plan will complement and interface with the Corps of Engineers' concurrent environmental restoration project in the Savannah River Harbor.

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- G. An evaluation of beach erosion on Tybee Beach.
- H. A study of the distribution of shortnose sturgeon in the lower Savannah River.

IX. Appendix B List of Tentative or Proposed Issues for Possible Study

- A. Essential Elements
 - 1. Impacts on salinity to the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge,
 - 2. Impacts on salinity and dissolved oxygen to the endangered shortnose sturgeon,
 - 3. Impacts on salinity and other impacts to striped bass spawning and nursery habitat,
 - 4. Impacts on chloride levels, especially to the city's water intake.
 - 5. Impacts on dissolved oxygen deficit caused by harbor deepening.
- B. Model Verification
- C. Salinity Changes
- D. Dissolved Oxygen
- E. Chloride Levels
- F. Striped Bass
- G. Shortnose Sturgeon
- H. Fresh Water Wetlands
- I. Salt Water Wetlands
- J. Tide Gate Restoration
- K. Cumulative Impacts from Previous Dredging
- L. Closing Middle River
- M. Fishery Management Plans
- N. Anadromous Fish Populations
- O. Other Fish Species; red drum, American shad, Atlantic salmon, river herring
- P. Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)
- Q. Endangered Species Act Compliance

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- R. Management of Contaminated Sediments
- S. Beach Erosion
- T. Channel Slope Erosion
- U. Ft. Pulaski Erosion
- V. Dissolved Oxygen/Fecal Coliform on Beaches
- W. Agitation Dredging
- X. Sand as a Resource
- Y. Upstream Water Releases
- Z. Project Economics
- AA. Corps of Engineers Section 1135 Restoration Study
- BB. Corps of Engineers Savannah River Comprehensive Study
- CC. Bend widener impacts
- DD. Ft. Pulaski impacts
- EE. Dredged Material Disposal Capacity and Impacts
- FF. Impacts on Adjacent South Carolina Properties
- GG. Integration with the COE Savannah River Basin Comprehensive Water Resources Management Study
- HH. Tidal Amplitude
- II. Ballast Water

X. Appendix C Membership of the SEG

This listing will be kept current as changes in membership occur. Listing here in no way precludes participation by any agency, group, or individual.

- A. Georgia Ports Authority
- B. Army Corps of Engineers
- C. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- D. National Marine Fisheries Service
- E. Environmental Protection Agency
- F. U.S. Department of Transportation
- G. Georgia Department of Natural Resources

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- H. Georgia Environmental Protection Division
- I. South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control
- J. South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
- K. City of Savannah
- L. City of Tybee Island
- M. South Atlantic Regional Fishery Management Council
- N. Savannah Manufacturers Council
- O. Savannah Harbor Committee
- P. Chatham Environmental Forum
- Q. Coastal Group Sierra Club
- R. The Coastal Environmental Organization of Georgia
- S. The Georgia Conservancy
- T. Georgia Wildlife Federation
- U. Georgia Department of Transportation

XI. Appendix D SEG Committees

A. Operating Guidelines Committee

1. Mission:

To refine the draft operating guidelines and recommend a version to the SEG for approval

To make recommendations to the SEG on operational procedures and to keep the operating guidelines current to reflect the decisions of the SEG on operational matters. Develop and maintain a matrix of issues and the committees considering those issues. The matrix is understood to be an information tool with no operational imperative itself. It is provided to ensure the membership is informed of which committees are considering which issues and to provide a mechanism for committees to coordinate among themselves.

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2. Member organizations:
 - a. City of Tybee
 - b. Coastal Environmental Organization of Georgia
 - c. Savannah Manufacturer's Council Harbor Committee
 - d. Georgia Ports Authority
 - e. U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 - f. Army Corps of Engineers
 - g. Chatham Environmental Forum
 - h. Coastal Group Sierra Club
- B. Beach Erosion Committee
 1. Mission:

To develop the scope of scientific study needed to determine impacts of the project on sand resources/sharing at Tybee Island.
 2. Member organizations:
 - a. City of Tybee
 - b. Army Corps of Engineers
 - c. Chatham Environmental Forum
 - d. Georgia Department of Natural Resources
 - e. The Georgia Conservancy
 - f. Georgia Ports Authority
 - g. Unaffiliated individuals
- C. Striped Bass Committee
 1. Mission:

Determine the scientific analyses needed to determine the effect of the project upon the efforts to restore the striped bass fishery in the Back River
 2. Member organizations:
 - a. Georgia Department of Natural Resources
 - b. Army Corps of Engineers

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- c. Georgia Ports Authority
 - d. US Fish and Wildlife Service (ex officio)
 - e. South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
 - f. Coastal Group Sierra Club
 - g. National Marine Fisheries Service
- D. Modeling Technical Review Group
- 1. Mission:

Develop the scope of work for field data collection for dissolved oxygen model development, chloride model development, and interstitial marsh salinity model development. Develop the scope of work for a field study of the distribution of shortnose sturgeon in the lower Savannah River. Develop the scopes of work for the chloride model development task (SEGCL1), the dissolved oxygen model development task (SEGD01), and the marsh succession study task (SEGM1) and other tasks as specified by the SEG.

- 2. Member organizations:
 - a. Environmental Protection Agency
 - b. Georgia Ports Authority
 - c. Army Corps of Engineers
 - d. National Marine Fisheries Service
 - e. Georgia Department of Natural Resources
 - f. South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control
 - g. South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
 - h. City of Savannah
 - i. Savannah Manufacturers Council
 - j. Savannah Harbor Committee
 - k. The Coastal Environmental Organization of Georgia
 - l. US Fish and Wildlife Service (ex officio)
 - m. Chatham Environmental Forum
 - n. Coastal Group Sierra Club

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- E. Communications Committee
 - 1. Mission:

Determine the needs and desires of the SEG membership for information distribution and event notification
 - 2. Member organizations:
 - a. The Coastal Environmental Organization of Georgia
 - b. Coastal Group Sierra Club
 - c. Georgia Ports Authority
 - d. The Georgia Conservancy
 - e. Coastal Georgia Center for Sustainable Development
 - f. Chatham Environmental Forum
 - g. U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 - h. Army Corps of Engineers
 - i. Office of Congressman Jack Kingston
- F. Fisheries Committee
 - 1. Mission
 - 2. Member organizations
- G. Economic Working Group
 - 1. Mission
 - 2. Member organizations
- H. Dredging and Disposal Committee
 - 1. Mission
 - 2. Member organizations

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